



# FASHION INTERNATIONAL

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION WORLD

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## ROLE PLAYING

*New York Spring 2003*

If the recent fashion shows are any indication, spring 2003 will provide women with a variety of role playing options. FI has broken these down into four distinct categories: All-American, Sophisticated Lady, The Mavericks, and Pretty Woman.

For the cutting-edge urban crowd there are those hip,

trend-setting designers we've dubbed The Mavericks. Y&KEI's modern, "post-Urban" collection fits the bill perfectly. Silhouettes are structured, yet soft and fluid (think Balenciaga for a reference point here). Vintage inspired lace mixes with burnt-out suede, crinkled silk with washed denim, and chiffon is

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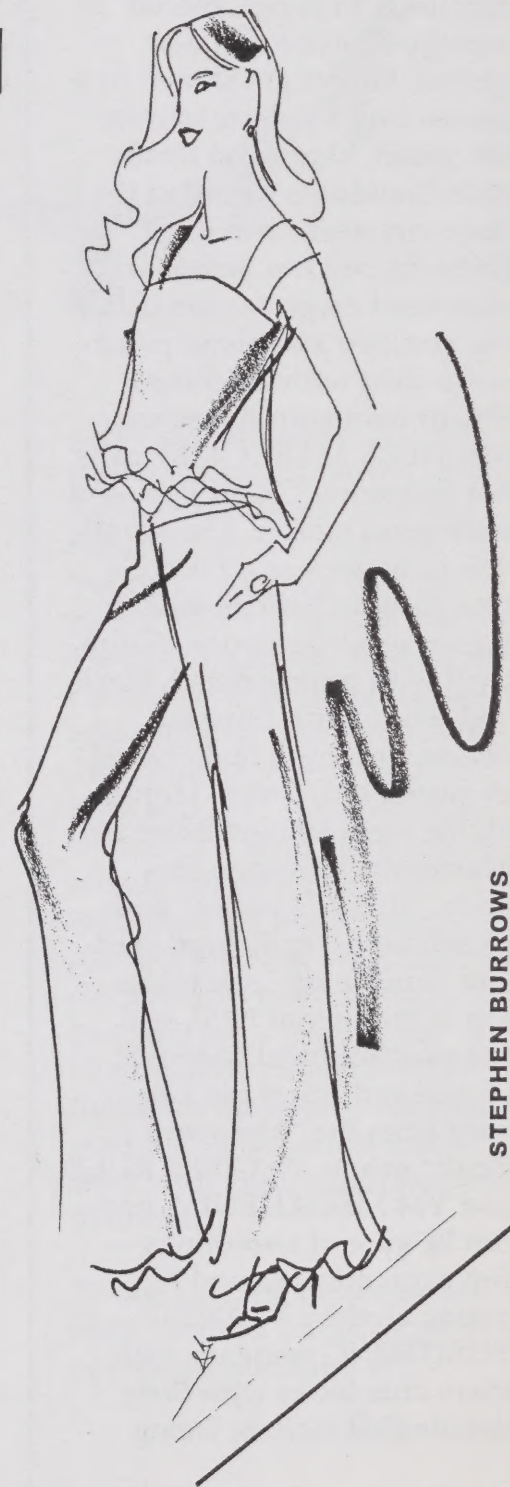
## SPORTY MIXED WITH SPICE

*London Spring 2003*

London is still the city that gives a kick to clothing. The intensive London Fashion Week was chaotic, fun and wacky enough to set it apart. We saw shows staged in an underground garage at midnight,

an open-air theatre, a grand hotel ballroom and, of course, on the runways of the new British Fashion Council venue near Sloane Square. There were as many as twenty shows in one day, on and off site. It is impossible to take in

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STEPHEN BURROWS



layered over cotton and embellished with intricate embroidery and flocking. Last season's ubiquitous calf length cargo pants (thank you, once again, Nicholas Guesquiere) are paired with draped tops, while bias cut gowns get handkerchief hemlines. Layered, pieced together, frayed and distressed fabrics are shown in a muted dusty palette of muslin, green, khaki and dusty rose. Standouts included the laser-cut suede and linen embroidered top paired with oversized cargo trousers, and the crinkled silk blend patchwork shirt with crocheted flower over cotton trousers. MICHELE MARCOMBE calls her collection Grand Prix, and with good reason. The silhouette is as sleek as a Formula One racecar. Fabrics include brown or white cotton denim twill with piping detail, black and white satin finished cotton, and pure linen tweed in muted red/green. Hitting all the right fashion notes are Marcombe's close-to-the-body, "driver's jacket" with coordinating split-front skirt and "buckle up" sleeveless top in the denim twill, and her asymmetrical, side-tied blouse and spiral cut zipper pant from the "Uptown Punk" group. At GIRLS RULE and YM MEGADENIM, one can be sure of two things — fun presentations and hip, young clothes. PLANET YUMTHING came up with clean cute looks with flirty details that include lacing



MICHELE MARCOMBE

ribbons and corset effects: in their words, "tattered glamour combined with ultra-femme." Best was the tan UltraSuede shirtdress with gold trimmed belt, a white cotton lace mini with drop waist detail, and white oxford boy shorts. KILLAH was all about summer fun with urban athletic inspired clothes. We loved the knockout multicolored striped cotton dropped waist dress; the gray and

white cotton tank paired with army printed cargo pants; and the stretch cotton zippered sweatshirt over a black bikini top and white nylon gym shorts trimmed in red/black. At PEACE LOVE VICTORY, the theme was global reality. This translated into a neon pink pinstripe denim coat dress over matching hot pants and a green bandeau top, plus cute neon green pinstripe



# FINE JEWELRY REDEFINED

It sounds glib to say that today's fine jewelers are only concerned about carving out pieces that are "individual", when fine jewelry has, out of economic necessity and like everything else in the luxury category, become focused on branding. Designers in all categories are attempting to reach out to customers on a global scale. High-end jewelers, known for a distinctive "look" that only the well to do could afford, have taken note and some are introducing bridge lines as fashion designers did in the '90s.

Additionally, not so long ago, jewelry was all about carat weight and counting how many grams of gold went into making a piece of jewelry or watch, rather than about design. After visiting the JA (Jewelers of America) and conversing with some of the jewelry industry's biggest stars, we've come to the conclusion that jewelry design is the most significant component of today's most sought after pieces. These are highlights of a few of the hottest fine jewelry collections.

## VERDURA

In the early 20th century, Duke of Verdura Fulco Santostefano Della Cerda considered big stones "mineralogy", not jewelry". It was

his startling idea to treat jewelry playfully, rather than with reverence. He felt jewelry was delightful, like candy, and it was more amusing to treat it as such, rather than as cold, untouchable pieces that were to be taken out of the vault once a year. Verdura's view is now very much in vogue, as are his designs, which are experiencing a revival with a new, younger clientele. The Duke was definitely on to something!

In the '70s and '80s Verdura had fallen off the map until, in 1984, ownership changed hands. The new owner, Ward Landrigan, is a former head of fine jewelry at Sotheby's. He realized that if he merely sold Verdura "originals", one day, he would be left without any stock. His solution was to create and present one new

collection annually. The new pieces are based on any of the 5,000 plus original sketches rendered by the Duke of Verdura, ensuring that the new pieces are 100% in the Verdura tradition. Traditional creations combined precious and semiprecious stones with "common elements from the land and sea", a previously unheard of idea. Here, even a simple seashell could be turned into a remarkable piece of jewelry. The Count designed an extraordinary compact for a gentleman client out of a clamshell he found on the beach. Verdura studded this commonplace shell with gold, sapphires and diamonds.

Today, Landrigan has broadened Verdura's audience by opening a boutique at



JUDITH RIPKA

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denim carpenter shorts over lime cotton tank, topped off by a yellow faux fur sweater. MAVI JEANS' influences comprised Japanese military details, travel, and an exploration of indigo, with attention to details, hardware and finishes. Best was a white ripped denim miniskirt paired with an exotic printed linen shirt, and topped by a Mandarin jacket in dark slub denim. St. Tropez circa 1976 inspired STEPHEN HARDY for SQUEEZE. Highlights included stretch jeans with illusion insets of skin tone pearlized suede, silk chiffon tunics with denim pockets, fitted denim jackets and minis, and vintage "French vanilla" chiffon tunics for dancing the night away.

Designers haven't forgotten about the lady who lunches a.k.a. the Sophisticated Lady. For her, the options include luncheon/career-worthy clothes for day, and totally feminine eveningwear that's sure to pass muster at any country club event. Designer Charles Nolan at ANNE KLEIN was in a sportive mood for day with utilitarian and athletic detailing on coveralls, biker jackets, tennis shorts and tank tops. Simple cuts, a palette of white, black, camel, red, pink, nude, ivory and pale gray, and fabrics such as cotton twill, satin, silk radsimir, organza, jersey, seersucker and buckskin set the all-American mood. Standouts included the

blouson shirtdress, cotton skirts with handkerchief hems, shrunk jackets over shorts, and a group of airy organza slip dresses with handkerchief hems (a recurring theme throughout). STEPHEN BURROWS offered a very special collection with an emphasis on late-day wear with that signature Burrows look. This master of cut, seaming, and fit showed a capsule group of delicious numbers. These included a bias chiffon cap sleeved cocktail dress with lettuce edging at hem, neckline and sleeves; a teal suede wrap jacket with pinked edges; a matte jersey long bias, racer-back column; and a delicate sky blue chiffon triple-layered top over low waist matching pants. ELLEN TRACY always produces a strong collection with plenty of options ... and this spring is no different. Full silhouettes were balanced by slim silhouettes. Pants were cropped and wide or narrow and long, while skirts ran the gamut from pleated tennis numbers, to long and sweeping or sophisticated and pencil slim. Princess seamed hip length jackets, sharply tailored military jackets, tunics and shirts finished with banding or wrapped ties, and a belted hip length trench in pink silk taffeta were just some of the elegantly practical choices. At CAROLINA HERRERA, safari cum military looks were translated for the Park Avenue set. Paisley chiffon embroidered tops and tunics work with bark colored silk

jeans or peridot silk/cotton pants. A bark organza blouse and silk jean skirt took this urban jungle look to impeccable heights. Herrera moved on to a lovely, embroidered crisp silk/cotton shirtdress and, for the younger customer, soft suede separates. RICHARD METZGER offered a surprisingly refined and elegant collection of late-day clothes for the plus size woman. Lightweight and luxurious were the words Metzger used to describe the collection. There were some lovely numbers, ranging from a luxe sterling quilted satin topper over a stretch silk dress in platinum, to a sexy lamb leather windbreaker in peridot, shown unexpectedly atop a multi-colored sequin pencil skirt. Also lovely – the pink quartz, silk satin dress with crisscross neckline and the chic duchess satin anorak in peridot atop a stretch silk, white gown.

There was a definite sense of American pride this season. Preppy, All-American looks made a strong showing at many collections. Clean, sporty, waspy, nostalgia was the mood. One of the foremost proponents of this "look" was TOMMY HILFIGER who provided easy preppy classics in a neutral color palette combined with unexpected fabric choices. Highlights included Hilfiger's take on the parachute pant, in silk crepe satin, paired with a cotton twill corset and silk



each one (especially since London's gridlock is one of the world's worst), but the mix of new and old, young and established, and the very new (i.e.: about to graduate next month) gives London a frisson that is exciting and suspenseful. Whose star is next to rise? What will we really be wearing in the spring of 2003?

The recurring theme is sporty mixed with spice! Miss Consumer will definitely be wearing some combat trousers, hanging low and loose and embellished with rhinestones. She will get them from Michiko Koshino, Blaik, Rafael Lopez (in parachute silk - great), Roland Mouret or Maria Chen Pasqual. For tops, something feminine, airy and flowing from any of the above designers plus Ronit Zilkha (in bright orange) and Boudicca. Jackets will be tight fitting and short and come from Eley Kishimoto, Katarzyna Szczotarska or Hamish Morrow. High heels finish off the perfect casual spring look.

Her dresses, and she will have many, should come from Betty Jackson (ruffled and strappy), Nicole Farhi, Ronit Zilka, Boudicca and Emma Cook. And each will be pretty, feminine and sure to sparkle. On holiday, even her bathing suits will shine, catching the reflection of both sun and sand, since it will be adorned with loads of rhinestones and sequins. This will

also carry through to the joy of evening dressing! This season, she will definitely dress up in a flowy soft elegant evening dress, which also sparkles to catch the candlelight. Of course, for that really special night out, give her Julian Macdonald so she can stop traffic! She would also be very happy beautifully clad by Ben De Lisi, Rafael Lopez and Roland Mouret. In short, you will recognize



JULIEN MACDONALD

the Spring 2003 babe straight away because she will be in black and white or hot pink, mixing funky and pretty, in a combination of Capri pants, combat trousers, lightweight tops (especially chiffon), lovely feminine dresses draped for drama and beauty, and knee length suits. Finally, for fun, add a couple of stone-studded swimsuits.

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Bergdorf Goodman. His plan is to create a more affordable line to be carried there, with pieces starting at \$5,000. Customers who desire custom pieces can still visit Landrigan's second floor salon. Also enlarging audience awareness will be a new book, *Verdura: The Life and Work of a Master Jeweler*, to be released by Publisher Harry N. Abrams in time for the holidays. Authored by Patricia Corbett, it will undoubtedly help to generate enthusiasm for these extraordinary designs worn by such fashion stars as Babe Paley, Coco Chanel, and Katherine Hepburn.

## DAVID YURMAN

David and his wife, Sibil, both began their careers as artists. David is a painter, and has a sense of color; Sibil frequently initiates the concept for new pieces. David looks to some of the savviest people in the business to make sure they're on the right track when designing new pieces. Among these consultants are super stylist Lori Goldstein and accessories maven Candy Pratts-Price. Together they decide on the top three colors for the new collection that they are working on.

Several years ago, David and Sibil were in an elevator, and Sibil looked at her wrist to check the time, before she realized she was looking not at a watch, but at a cable

bracelet. It was then that the couple got the idea to go into the watch business. Now in its third year, the watches are produced in Switzerland, in their own factory. David says, "We spend 20 days in Switzerland in the Jura region working on the watches. We are now our own company in Switzerland. Gucci bought the people we were working with. I don't want the Gucci Group making my watch." In the past few years, retailers have reported that men in particular are buying watches for themselves, oftentimes to accessorize individual outfits. As David is new in the watch business, he's found that men have to overcome their hesitancy in buying a watch that has an American designer name that they associate with women's jewelry. For men, Breitling and Tag Heuer have "muscle" in the marketplace, he notes. Women are an easier sell: they will buy into the fashion proposition that they are purchasing "a cool watch".

The company offers around 150 pieces of new jewelry a year, per David's estimation. This year, there were five new collections. At the JA, the signature cable designs were accentuated with black stones and diamonds, as well as cinnamon carnelian. New to the brand is the lower-priced line, also in sterling silver, starting at \$110. The signature line is primarily in silver and begins at \$450 for a starter cable bracelet. David doesn't work with white gold, as he considers sterling to be his white metal. He is currently designing some "unique

meshing" in a handmade mail chain, with a small company in Italy. There is also an all-platinum bridal line in the works.

Although he is one of the industry's leading stars, in an attempt to appeal to a younger woman customer, Yurman has just made a major move in changing his advertising. Mr. Yurman, reputed to be the industry's biggest advertiser, has a new black and white campaign, featuring supermodel, Amber Valetta, which has been very well-received by retailers and consumers alike. He has received kudos from the industry and from his target audience for employing David Lipman at LRG (the man responsible for producing the black and white Burberry ads that have been instrumental in promoting the house as fashion-forward). Lipman was able to capture on film the David Yurman DNA: "a quintessential, glamorous luxury product". We'll be able to see the best of the Yurman's new designs in the next ad campaign, to be shot this month, again art directed by David Lipman and featuring Amber Valetta. It will debut in the May fashion and lifestyle books.

## GURMIT

The designer of this relatively new self-named line is steadily finding her niche. Gurmit designs sculptural, edgy pieces for the woman who's not afraid of being an

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### RONIT ZILKHA

Zilkha kicked off the week with a sensational sizzling show which boasted scream and shout colors — calypso prints in bright orange and red florals; flouncy dresses with a flamenco theme in black and white, loads of sequins on linen and accented at the hip with wide bands. A happy collection which declared, if the girl wants to dance ... let her dance!

### SOPHIA KOKOSALAKI

London's hottest designer gets stronger each season. Not forsaking her must-have beautiful black evening dress (this time, jersey trimmed in distressed layers draping elegantly), Kokosalaki added many soft pastel colors, especially blue and sand. Lovely macramé accents around necklines, layered knee length chiffon skirts, and flawless attention to detail were highlights of this all in all star collection.

### RAFAEL LOPEZ

Pretty in white parachute silk with wings on the sleeves and cuffs of dresses and tops, this futuristic collection stood out. A designer to watch.

### HAMISH MORROW

A thoughtful collection of pretty and tough: metallic sneakers, Star Trek jumpsuits and flowery, soft, draping feminine dresses.

### ROLAND MOURET

Cargo pants with silk chiffon tops and loads of pink and georgette dresses made

Mourets collection float off the plinths upon which the models were perched —all both sexy and desirable.

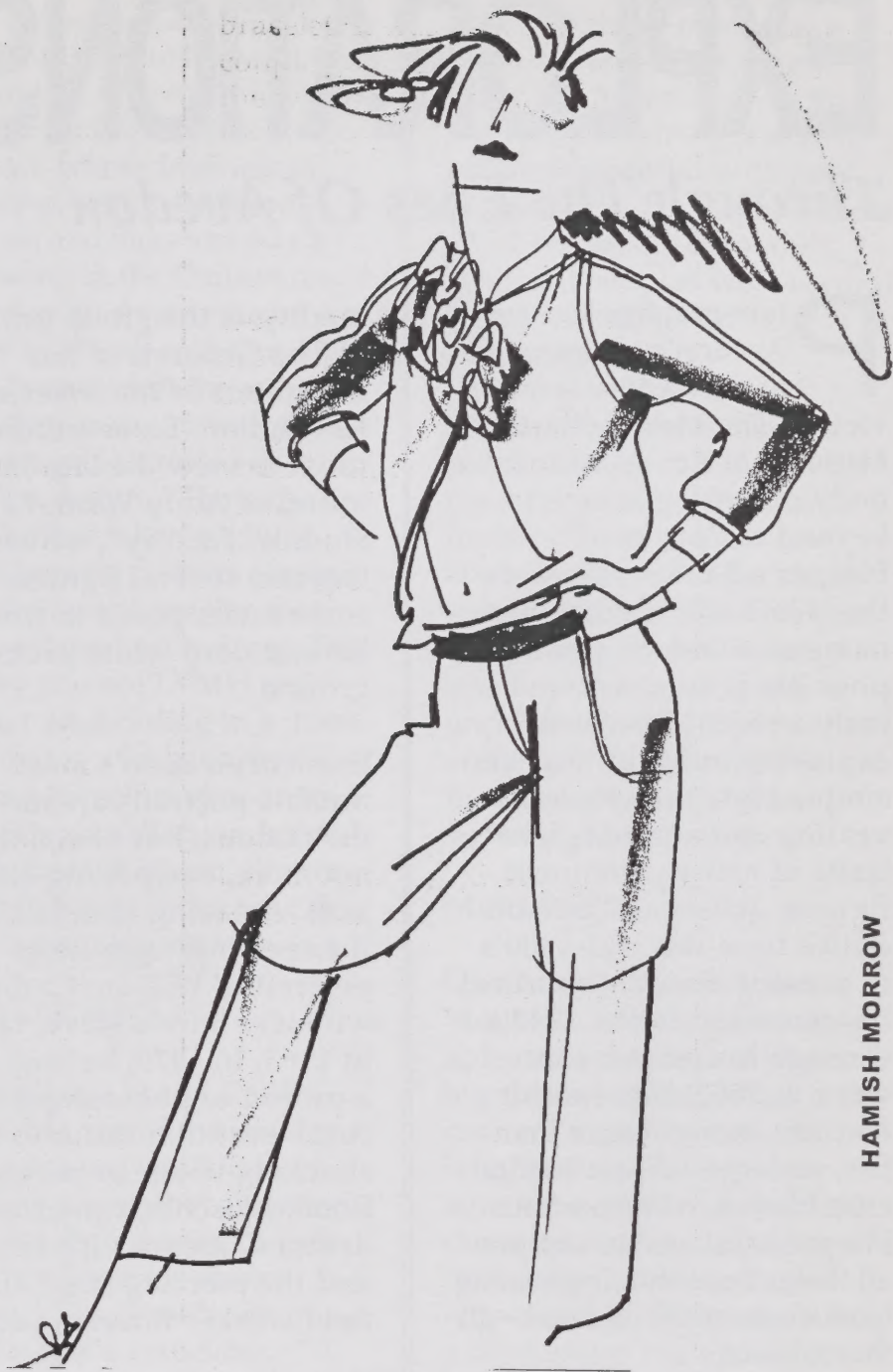
### MICHIKO KOSHINO

Combat trousers mixed with silky chiffon tops (a recurring theme of the week), Koshino's collection reflects a maturing which delights. The clubbing clothes are softer, antique lace blouses adorned with appliqués are feminine and

appealing. Skirts cut on the diagonal from silk flowed down the runway.

### ELSPETH GIBSON

She continues to give us what we desire — pretty! Her collection is whimsical with exquisite hand finished pieces covered with sequins, beads and colors, a feast for the



HAMISH MORROW

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# EXPLORATIONS

## *Through The Eyes Of Avedon*

Photographer Richard Avedon's unique style of portraiture is on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Avedon's body of work goes well beyond the pages of Harper's Bazaar where, in the '40s, he first made his name as a fashion photographer. He is an artist, and truly a visual historian, capturing in his unique yet simple style the often revealing and stunning portraits of many prominent figures, artists and personalities from the mid-1900's to present. From his earliest images taken in the 1940's through his most recent work in 2002, this exhibit features many larger than life, unforgettable, detailed crisp black & white portraits. His powerful images capture all that is beautiful, frightening (sometimes ugly) and real – all that is human

This stunning installation of his work includes a wide range of personalities: poets W.H. Auden and Ezra Pound; the unforgettable images of The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Marilyn Monroe, Bert Lahr, and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. A favorite, because of its amusing, natural, and not quite ready

quality, is the group portrait of The Generals of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Enter another room to view the late 1960's mural of Andy Warhol's studio, "Factory", which features several figures, some nude, posed in front of his standard white background.

Some of Avedon's most notable portraits are not of the famous, but of equally, if not more, compelling subjects. Amazing in detail is the seemingly grainless portrait of William Casby, who was born a slave, taken in 1963. In 1979, he took on a project to photograph the rural west that includes the shocking image of beekeeper Ronald Fischer, sun-crusted drifter Clarence Lippard, and the piercing stare of oil field worker Roberto Lopez.

In 1976, Rolling Stone Magazine assigned Avedon to cover America's bicentennial election. He took a unique approach: rather than chronicling the campaign events, he took individual portraits with white background and produced a composite that features heads of states, union leaders, bankers, and media moguls. Included in this group are portraits of

Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter before their presidencies. Glance at another wall and there's Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. Writers Truman Capote and Samuel Beckett are mounted not too far from the 1975 photographs of fashion editor Polly Mellen and designer James Galanos. Turn yet another corner to see a warm, sweet expression from the pianist Vladimir Horowitz.

It is said that when a photograph is taken, particularly a portrait, that the subject's expression is often the reaction to his or her thoughts and/or the relationship to their surroundings. What does a father being photographed by his son feel? What's going on between them? A wonderful array of emotions is captured in the images of Avedon's father, Jacob Israel Avedon. Coupled with this is the last room that is filled with his more recent work consisting of both friends and family: writer Doon Arbus; literary critic Harold Bloom; godson Luke Avedon; and the sweetest, natural, and playful display of affection between director Michelangelo Antonioni and his wife Enrica.

Take this great opportunity to see the over 180 images, which span Avedon's entire career.

"Richard Avedon: Portraits" (9/26/02-1/5/03)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue (82<sup>nd</sup> St)



individual. The designer has a strong fashion background as a longtime Alaïa model and a fixture on the couture catwalks. On moving to New York, she began designing pieces that were inspired by D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, a biologist and mathematician of the late 19th century. His analysis and interpretation regarding the growth and structure of organisms inspired Gurmit to design jewelry that "morphed with the body", rather than something that was an addition to the body. In addition, Gurmit has been inspired by the architecture that surrounds her in New York City. Consequently, her designs are increasingly sculptural in form. Her work includes a ring backed in gold called "a Brazilian bikini for the finger", featuring two spaced clusters of seed pearls, and the "titillating tease" earring. For "titillating tease," a gold wire wraps around the ear and hangs down, falling just short of the shoulder, with an unpolished stone of black or white mother of pearl at the end. Gurmit has recently been partial to mother of pearl for its "fresh feel" and versatility.

One of the most dazzling pieces Gurmit created was for the Tahitian Pearl competition. Her prize winning "toga necklace" is a stream of black pearls that drape about the body as a toga would. Two strands go around the neck, one strand dropping to envelop the whole body. With its Tahitian Pearl and gold

wire elements, says Gurmit, "it beautifies the landscape of the body". A client in Dallas purchased this couture piece. Gurmit, whose business is growing, sells at Neiman Marcus and Saks and has a following in the Dallas area. On what motivates the buyer, she is of the view that many people are not in the market for "diamond-y" jewelry, but are instead interested in jewelry design. "The view on jewelry has taken a whole turning point," states Gurmit. "Women want jewelry that makes them look young. This is why you see LVMH and Cartier are heading in a direction that is a lot groovier." Gurmit herself may soon be designing a collection for a major fashion house: she was in discussions at the time this article went to print.

#### PAUL MORELLI

Philadelphia based, Paul Morelli is one of the jewelry designers responsible for creating pieces that are sought after for their design, rather than just for their carat weight. FI met with one of Mr. Morelli's associates, Alison Holmes, at the JA, for a brief overview. Paul Morelli has been designing his collection for 20 years. His signature wire collection is the foundation of the line and put him on the map. His pieces are fashion inspired and theme is important. Recently, he introduced the "Garden Gate" collection, in which 18-carat gold and platinum are woven together with rough cabochons, producing a layered effect. These

labor-intensive pieces take some 30 odd hours to produce. Mr. Morelli hit on the trend of combining a non-precious material with precious stones. He has necklaces and bracelets in turquoise, gold and ruby, as well as coral ("the new turquoise"), gold and ruby.

While mere carat weight is not the principal focus of his pieces, Paul Morelli doesn't hesitate to use quite a few. His ruby petal bib necklace was featured earlier this year in *The New York Times Magazine*. It contains 46 carats of unpolished rubies and is priced at \$17,335. The layered effect of the jeweled strands makes it signature Paul Morelli.

#### MOUWAD

Owner and designer, Pascal Mouwad, is keen on keeping abreast of the market place. A big winner for Mouwad is the rose cut diamond collection launched about two years ago. A rose cut diamond has the appeal of looking larger than it really is due to the way it is cut. The rose cut has a flat bottom with 24 facets. A 20 point (1/5 carat) stone looks like a 33 point stone. Also important now, says Pascal, are colored stones in pastel tones, as well as crosses and pieces with a botanical theme. At the time we went to press, Mouwad was introducing a diamond and leather line. One of Pascal's favorites is a ring with leather petals on the outside revealing a center of rose cut diamonds set in white gold.

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Fashion designers aren't the only ones to use celebrity sparkle to promote their brands. Important in this effort is Pascal's "Statements" collection. He recently designed a magnificent 124.10 platinum and diamond necklace for Britney Spears that exactly matched a silver halter gown she wore to the premiere of *Crossroads*. Mr. Mouwad controls production from start to finish (as does David Yurman), which enables him to offer his designs at a lower price point than he otherwise could.

## JUDITH RIPKA

Judith Ripka also uses a bit of "celebrity sparkle" to promote her fine jewelry. Actress Sarah Jessica Parker wore a Ripka dewdrop necklace, "the Cleo", in white gold, in a recent episode of *Sex In the City*. The piece is part of the new collection which Alice Acquilino, the company's director of advertising and public relations, says is "swinging, less structured and more fun. Judith felt she needed to make pieces that were lighter and happier after 9/11." There are many long dangling earrings and bezel set diamonds in the collection. Although the designer has always worked in yellow gold, Ms. Acquilino has noticed a strong interest and use of yellow gold in the fine jewelry market.

Celebrity publicity is helping also bringing attention to her latest endeavor, Judith Ripka Two. Alice Acquilino, says the launch of the bridge line is the big news. The sterling silver and 18-carat gold collection is she explains, "a little more casual and is targeted to appeal to a new range of customers who might not be able to afford the 18-carat collection which retails between \$2000-\$10,000 (the average piece retails for \$5,000). Judith Ripka Two is also an affordable way for the 18-carat customer to "fill in" her Judith Ripka collection. The secondary collection ranges from between \$500-\$2,000 per piece.

## "EXPLORATIONS" continued from page 8

Hours: Monday, closed;  
Tues-Thurs., 9:30AM-  
5:30PM, Fri.-Sat., 9:30AM-  
9PM; Sun., 9:30AM-5:30  
PM. For information, con-  
tact: 212-535-7710.

## A CHOCOLATE FANTASY

Let the tasting begin! The Fifth Annual Chocolate Show's three-day celebration will take place from November 15-17 (Friday-Sunday). Open to the public, the festival will encompass everything chocolate with booths featuring over 50 brands of chocolate. Visitors will be able to feast their eyes on chocolate fashions, sculptures and showpieces.

There will be chocolate samples, holiday gifts, and a Barnes & Noble cookbook store with book signings by authors and pastry chefs. If you want brush up on your chocolate knowledge and know-how, there will be three Demo Centers with demonstrations given by top pastry chefs and chocolate makers. Even children will be able to participate in chocolate activities.

FI will be particularly interested in the 2002 collection of Couture in Chocolate. Designers will pair with chocolate masters and pastry chefs to achieve their scrumptious creations of chocolate. Among those showing are: Arend & Francois Payard, Nicole Miller & Nicole Kaplan,

Kenneth Cole & Jacques Torres and Carmen Marc Valvo & Yvan Lemoine, Fleur de Sel. Some designers will use chocolate as the primary fabric, while others use it as an ornament or detailed embroidery. Bon Appetite!

## CHOCOLATE SHOW NEW YORK

The Metropolitan Pavilion  
125 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NY  
(between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues)  
Hours: Friday: 1PM-8PM,  
Saturday: 10AM-8PM, Sun-  
day: 10AM-6PM  
For information, contact:  
212-865-6100.  
Press: 212-244-0622.  
([www.chocolateshow.com](http://www.chocolateshow.com))



camisole; and his charmeuse blazer, ribbed camisole and cotton cargo shorts. There was a fabulous cotton lace tank with silk crepe satin cargo skirt, and a pretty pleated dress with hip belt in the same fabric. Always a step ahead of the crowd, ANNA SUI taps into the zeitgeist with a razor sharp wit. Her spring collection was, in our opinion, her best yet! From the get go, there were stylish riffs on the classic prepster meets hip hop with a black/white windowpane jacket, football tee, kilt, crinkled nylon zipped pants, and a black sequin athletic mesh football jersey over windowpane skirt. Sui teed off with golf inspired embroidered numbers like a fabulous white golf embroidered polo and sateen chain stitched skirt, and the black golf bag embroidered coat, stripe tube top and knit skirt. Also knockouts — the jockey border print silks in red/white, and the beaded red linens. Simply gorgeous was her white beaded cardigan shown atop white voile, strawberry embroidered shirtdress.

Wide-eyed innocence was very much a part of the spring Pretty Woman scene. At CYNTHIA STEFFE this translated into feminine embroidered netting, fishnet and fringed detailing, hand crochet and macramé inserts, corseting details and bias appliqués. Steffe

showed a pretty '50s inspired candy stripe shirtdress, an ivory floral trench over a macramé gauze sundress, and a charming pin tucked black batiste dress. Totally adorable was NANETTE LEPORE's collection that played up easy shapes combined with soft colors. There was a darling tulip print group to get the show going, followed by some cute separates, like the embroidered top and zipper pant, a wrap-top over pleated pants, and the "Rosie the Riveter" overalls. Smock and apron dresses also stood out in a very focused collection. TOCCA was inspired by Berlin café society, and the collection, with a hint of romance and kittenish sensuality, was on target for their devoted following. To their exclusive fabrics, Tocca added a feminine color palette of rosette, bluebird, rain, crème, absinthe, parfait, citron and black. Prints and embroideries included feathers, strawberries, ribbons and roses. Standouts here were a floral embroidered puff sleeve, zip-front blouse, and sweet slip dress in black net over peach with peacock feather embroidered hem. Also lovely was Tocca's Peter Pan collared retro blouse in a strawberry print with cap sleeves and ruches on the bodice. This was paired with blue cotton drill flared pants with tucking details. New kid on the block, ZAC POSEN, named his show the Circe Collection in homage to the goddess. While some of the time

his reach exceeded his grasp, this was an auspicious debut. Posen displays a great talent for intricate draping and tailoring. This talent came to the fore in some of the prettiest bias chiffon '30s inspired "croquet" and "daydream" dresses, a striking, carved close-to-the-body "glider" jacket (reminiscent of Mugler), and floaty culottes. Black, ivory and pink was the color palette at NICOLE MILLER. Her capsule collection focused on feminine late-day dressing with delicate ribbon details, and lace appliqué trims. For the Prada devotee on a budget there was a stretch silk georgette strapless dress in a cherry print with black crisscross straps, and a sweet georgette shirt with pin tucks and lace appliqué atop washed black silk habutai side-tab pants. Also cute, Miller's pink printed tee and cherry print georgette panel skirt, and an ivory georgette top with black flower embroidery over black habutai pants. Miller switched gears for her finale. Very sophisticated was a '30s referenced ivory washed silk charmeuse dress with dog collar, the ivory embroidered black tulle strapless number, and the lingerie look silk charmeuse dresses that closed the show.



and colors, a feast for the eyes. Gibson opened her catwalk show to the public by selling tickets for the children's charity, Barnardos, and even strolled down the walkway with some of the Barnardos children.

#### KATARZYNA SZCZOTARSKA

Strong tailoring leaps off the catwalk and puts her way ahead of most of the other designers. Navy trench swing coats with huge round pockets set an otherwise ordinary classic look apart. Her attention to detail and quality is impressive. Szczotarska is a designer to watch carefully.

#### BETTY JACKSON

A designer that always shows well, Betty Jackson has confidence and knows her market. Black, white and pink hues capture the essence of this season. Pieces were accessorized by large obi-like belts, loosely tied over strongly tailored straight trousers and topped with pink and silver sequined tops. Jackson again accentuated her strength in leathers. Her suedes in suits, jackets and trousers stood out.

#### BLAAK

Sachiko Okada and Aaron Sharif produced silver cat suits for both men and women, made of space age blankets with collars resembling airplane blow-up neck pillows. Lots of fishnet, layers and fluorescence with pleated skirts and pink hot

pants in neon made this show kicky and fun!

#### GIBO

The most hyped show of the week, but Verhoeven's black trousers with ruches and Esher-like print, tight trousers failed to impress. The entire audience poured out in silence.

#### BEN DE LISI

Again, another London based designer who understands his market. Strappy evening dresses with rhinestone collars worked into necklaces, which draped down the back, embellished the pretty, colorful and very feminine silk organza gowns.

#### PRINGLE

The Scottish cashmere label had its first show since the Fifties to promote its new flagship shop opening on glamorous Bond Street. Will Pringle manage to totally reinvent itself like Burberry and become a fashion must-have? I think so. While Pringle invented the original twin set that we now associate with Audrey Hepburn, this classic item now has a twist; they are strapless and adorned with jewels. Along with twin sets are pants, from shorts to trousers, in argyle patterns, and halter tops that are excitingly encrusted with pearls. Audrey would still love the look.

#### JULIEN MACDONALD

Held in the grand ballroom of the Grovenor Hotel, this was an elegant setting for an elegant presentation, Macdonald's collection caused a 'frisson' which was not

always in evidence during the week. The free-flowing champagne certainly helped, as did the presence of Naomi Campbell (supermodels are a rare sight in London). MacDonald has a huge hard following of fans, and he did not disappoint them. Black and white well-cut suits with large gold and silver rivets, very Versace prints, more fishnets, flashes of fuchsia, yellow, red Capri pants and short shorts. There was enough shine and sparkle to please his fans, and Naomi wore a diamond encrusted swimsuit and eight million pound diamond necklace.

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